

Criminal Damage To A Vehicle

A 17 year old jumped along the roofs of vehicles when drunk, causing £2,800 of damage to an Alpha Romeo.

Max was 17 and, out celebrating with a friend, got drunk, jumped along the roofs of several cars, causing considerable criminal damage, including to an Alfa Romeo. This car was four months old – too new to scrap – and the repair bill was £2,800. Needless to say the victim was very angry and frustrated with the pointlessness of it all and very inconvenienced. Max appeared in court for criminal damage and was given a 3 month Referral Order. Max told the Referral Order Panel that he wanted to apologise and the Youth Offending Team Police Constable referred him to the Mediation Scheme at his own request, agreed by the Panel. Max also took part in some community reparation events, including a sponsored swim to raise money for a local charity. We visited Max first at home. Being 17 he was able to choose to see us alone. He had not involved his parents in the case at all, feeling very ashamed and needing to see himself as coping with the consequences of his actions. During the visit lasting about 1.5 hours we talked through with Max the consequences for himself, his future, his family and especially for his victims – who of course were unknown to him. He expressed real regret and a firm wish to apologise face-to-face. He decided to write a letter of apology saying how much he wanted to meet to give the apology in person. He wrote a good and sincere letter which we took away with us. Two cars had been severely damaged. One of the owners did not want to meet us or go forward to mediation. The second one did. We then had to wait for victim details from the Youth Offending Team who, for data protection reasons, must make the first contact. After about a fortnight we were given a name and address which was out of date, so there was a delay of about a month. The victim, Trevor, was reluctant to see us but willing to talk on the phone. He agreed to receive the letter by post and contact us again to let us know if he wanted to meet. However, we had to make the follow-up call. Trevor still wasn't sure he wanted to meet Max. He said the letter was fine as far as it went – but was it genuine? After much discussion he agreed to meet at a neutral venue. To prepare Max for the mediation we met with him beforehand to talk him through what he might say and how he would cope with the anger which might be expressed. He was determined to go ahead although nervous. We also met with Trevor to help him think through what he might say. We were assessing each party to ensure that this would be a safe situation and were convinced it would be. The face-to-face mediation was very successful, judged by

the changed attitude of the victim by the end of the meeting. Hands were shaken and good wishes exchanged, but not until a fair amount of anger and frustration had been expressed honestly though not abusively. Max accepted the responsibility for what he had done. He didn't use drink as an excuse – indeed he stressed that drinking too much is also an offence which he didn't intend to repeat. His obvious regret did eventually get through the anger and frustration of the victim, but both agreed that it couldn't actually take away the damage done. Trevor began to ask Max about himself and his future, gave him some advice which he said had been learned the hard way and they both talked freely about moving on and what that meant to them. There was a real sense of closure for both. Both completed mediation evaluation forms most positively at a later date. Both victims received some financial compensation. Max paid a sum of money towards this.